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There's black gold in them white fields

By Will Nicholls

I love places like Whapmagoostui. It is so far North that many of the traditional Cree ways are still intact and practiced. People are friendly and welcoming and there is not as much suspicion of the outsiders. Generosity and sharing are practiced on great scales.

A recent Grand Council/Cree Regional Authority Annual General Assembly saw almost every non-resident attending the meetings gifted with a pair of traditional gloves. This is a small example of the way everyone is treated.

Places like Whapmagoostui and the Inuit communities though are in for some big changes as the Canadian frontier gets pushed further and further North. It will happen and many companies are gearing up for it. In July, the U.S. Geological Survey estimated nearly a quarter of the entire planet's undiscovered petroleum reserves lie in the Arctic. They estimate 90 billion barrels of oil and it's even bigger when you consider natural gas' potential of 1,670 trillion cubic feet.

Most of it, grant you, is located offshore and this creates a number of difficulties. Remember we are talking the far North with stormy seas, icebergs, months of nothing but night, ice, moving ice, melting ice and intense winds that would make a wind-power magnate drool.

Still the oil companies, who will make saving Great Whale look like a pillow fight, are gearing up to conquer the North. Imperial Oil and its parent company Exxon Mobil have put up \$585 million to explore the riches in the Arctic. This is in addition to monies already spent opening up Imperial Oil's Northwest territories Nigluktuk, Taglu and Parson's gas fields. BP, the British oil firm, has committed a staggering \$1.2 billion

to explore the Beaufort Sea just off of the Northwest territories.

Though it's far to the west of the Eastern James Bay Cree and Inuit territories one can easily look into the future as new technologies are developed to exploit the North. They will be coming and we'd better be ready.



The oil spill from the Exxon Valdez tanker was a warning sign say many environmental groups. Given the difficulties in clean-up and the relative fragility of the Arctic eco-system there could be serious consequences and a true danger to protected ways of life for the Cree and the Inuit.

Are these dangers non-existent? The Canadian military doesn't think so. In response to climate change and the opening of the fabled Northwest Passage there have been increases in activity of all sorts in the Arctic waters. Brigadier-General David Miller of the Joint Task Force North is conducting operations that are "focused on the types of marine disasters that could potentially happen with a sharp increase in naval activity in the North." One of the tasks of Operation Nanook will simulate a fuel-spill emergency.

It is unknown at this time to what extent the environmental damage will have on the entire eco-system of the North let alone the socio-economic impacts. In any case First Nations and the Inuit have to start preparing themselves for this latest round of exploration and exploitation of the North.

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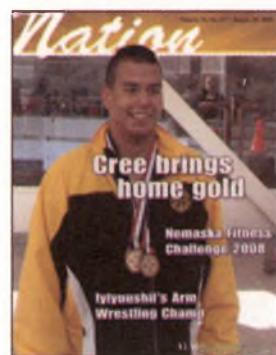
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on the cover:
Gabriel Rabbitskin

photo by:
Don Nicholls



by
**Sonny
Orr**

Money matters

I often thought about other people and sometimes I wonder how they do it. How do they get all the things that they have? What kind of money does it take to get what they want? So I did a little research on the topic and discovered a few surprising things about how that money is made and how it is spent.

For instance, did you know that there are fewer people on welfare as compared to 10 years ago. It just means that people are fed up with what they make and try a little harder to get what they want by going to a more lucrative income: training. Most times these people don't stop there, they just keep on going until they land a job, then make their money and save it until they have enough to buy whatever. And then they just keep up with the same formula, get settled, raise kids... and you know the rest. That's one way.

Another group of people grow up in the same environment but at a little higher income level, but they seem to remain that way for the rest of their lives, not having enough money for other things aside from essentials, just getting by and perhaps trying a bit to improve their income level. Because of their steady income and pretty guaranteed income for life because of pensions, they end up qualifying for credit or a loan. This usually happens after saving pennies for years until there's enough to guarantee the first loan. They skimp for a year or two and save until they have enough to pay off the debt before too much interest occurs. Then they continue doing the same until they get what they want. That's another way.

Another set of people try to do the same as the second group, but they get caught by trying to buy things other than essentials and skimp on paying off the loan. This group never

gets out of debt but they do work harder at getting more money to pay off those loans and I.O.U's. This eventually turns in favour of not paying bills, electricity, and no matter how much money they make, they never get out of debt, sometimes passing it on to their kids when they go to heaven. That's one of the more common ways.

Then there's another group, who have a low income and live off the land. For some reason, they manage to get by just on essentials for months at a time between pay periods and still have (what many are becoming) resorts in the bush and a home in town. They just work on Indian time, from sunrise to sundown, every day except Sundays, until they get what the love of the land returns to them, with money safely hidden away in bank accounts for months at a time for an exceptional few. But many of these folks, when they are in town, feel the stress of the long wait in between paydays and long for the days when the price of fur was high. That's our basic group of earners.

A few individuals throughout the communities are now trying their hand at making money in commerce and business and the many who do make it, do well enough for the next generation. Others, like the ones who like to run things for everyone, from time to time when they get hired by the people to lead them, go for the gold, silver and bronze of income earners and spend money on more than essentials. More often than not, even when they are unemployed, they still have a job to sustain their income levels. The ones who do make it at this level often have to maintain their popularity levels to maintain their income levels. While others slip off into obscurity when they don't.

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The war on pigs

As the town of Chapais enters into a new phase with its projected hog farm, abattoir and meat-processing plant, tempers flare amid confusion.

By Amy German

Since 2004 Chapais has been vying to set up a \$100 million high-tech hog farm on Category III lands but in the wake of a public outcry the town managers are now looking to relocate the project to lands owned exclusively by the municipality.

Town Manager for Chapais, Laurent Levasseur, was happy to announce that the project will now be entering into a new phase with the backing of Polish and Russian partners who are currently developing a company structure. All of the meat produced at the plant will be exported for mainly Russian markets.

Though there has been a great deal of controversy in Quebec over pork production in the last three years with the provincial government handing out subsidies to farms who are barely, if even, making ends meet, Levasseur says that this project will be exempt from this situation.

"The backers have told us, that this is a profitable project and that they have studied all of the technical aspects and their feasibility and they want to go with it," said Levasseur.

At the same time, Levasseur, who is quite aware of the discontent over the project from both the Crees and many concerned Chapais residents, said that he feels that they have found a better solution to building on the Category III lands that were in the original proposal.

Levasseur said that studies are currently being conducted on a new site that is owned outright by the municipality of Chapais that were previously part of the Opimiska mine. According to him, since these are not lands that are considered traditional hunting territory as those in the original plan, Chapais could proceed with the project provided that it passes the impact assessment from the Ministry of Environment.

In other words, should the project receive an approval certificate from the ministry, Chapais would be able to proceed with the project.

"It is being studied and it is going very well. I think that we will be able to set up the plant here instead," said Levasseur.

Levasseur and André Poulin, the environmental engineer who helped in part to design the "closed circuit" farm and production facility, have also said publicly that with the high-tech equipment, this project would have no impact on the environment.

"All of the waste matter is comprised of organic residues and we would be able to produce energy from it. It is a completely closed system and there would be no waste outside of the plant. No spreading, no odours, there is no internal lagoon, no open systems. It would be completely closed inside of the building," said Poulin who believes that the only actual impact of the plant would be social.

According to Levasseur, in that the new project is contained, its water source would also be from the town of

Chapais and not have any interaction with any of the local waterways.

Not only would this plant theoretically be able to power itself from the energy derived by converting the waste, Poulin said that there would also be no odours produced by the plant, its greenhouse gasses would be minimal and the waste water would be processed so that the end result is "very, very clear water."

SINCE THESE ARE NOT LANDS THAT ARE
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AS THOSE IN THE ORIGINAL PLAN, CHAPAINS
COULD PROCEED WITH THE PROJECT PROVIDED
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But, just because the project sounds good in principal, it does not mean that Chapais locals are on board.

Chapais resident Gulaine Alexandre is infuriated over the project as the town's infrastructure is already suffering and she feels that more precedence is being given to industry than the tax-paying public.

"We in Chapais are not able to get a proper dumpsite or a decent sewage system for human waste and now we are supposed to be treating pig waste? We don't even have potable water for I don't know how many years now, we have to boil our water or buy it bottled," said Alexandre.

Though Alexandre has no issue with the town of Chapais developing the region, she feels that it is being done on the backs of locals and those in outer-lying regions as hog farming has a wretched history of pollution and water contamination.

According to the Cree Regional Authority, the only documentation that has been submitted for review to the Ministry of Environment consisted of the original proposal and not the second option that Levasseur described. The CRA can only go on what has been presented to them and until such time that the primary proposal is withdrawn and the new one is presented, they are not inclined to comment on information that is unavailable to them.

Though like any agricultural project in the region, any new option for this project would naturally be subject to an environmental review by the ministry. At the same time as this project in theory would be on non-Native land and apparently not affecting wildlife resources outside the limits, should the ministry approve it, according to Levasseur the project may be difficult to stop despite the opposition of the Crees and those in Chapais.

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RESULTS OF MOOSE CREE FIRST NATION GENERAL ELECTION

August 9, 2008

**"Congratulations
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TO OFFICE OF DEPUTY CHIEF: Charlie Cheechoo

TO OFFICE OF ELDER COUNCILLOR: Robert Vincent

TO OFFICE OF YOUTH COUNCILLOR: Gregory Rickard

TO OFFICE OF COUNCILLOR:

Charlie Alisappi

Doreen Blackned

Earl Cheechoo

Richard Cheechoo

Bob Echum

Katherine Faries

George Lazarus

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And the Beat Goes On...

Hot off of the heels of their second annual Native Women's Summit, NWAC's Beverly Jacobs rehashes what went down but more so what still needs to happen

By Amy German

Violence against Canada's Indigenous women, the overrepresentation of Aboriginal women in the judicial system, Kelowna, the trafficking and prostitution of Aboriginal girls and the general population's belligerent indifference to all of it. These were just a handful of topics that were discussed when 150 First Nations women congregated in Yellowknife on July 29-31 at the Native Women's Association of Canada's second National Aboriginal Women's Summit.

The goal of the summit, according to NWAC president Beverly Jacobs, was to go through each of the 140 recommendations that were defined at the first summit held in the spring of 2007 in Corner Brook, Newfoundland and prepare an action to implement them.

"A lot of it was about education or the lack of education," said Jacobs, who would like to see a "Native Studies 101" introduced into the education system not just for the purposes of sensitizing the population to Aboriginal issues but also to help shape policymaking and legislations when it comes to Canada's First Nations.

A prime example of this was the need for the training of frontline workers in the justice system from police to judges to lawyers as not only are Aboriginal women over-represented in the judicial system but there are no resources to train these workers. Addressing the underlying issues that lead so many to be imprisoned, such as their lack of education and resources, loss of cultural identity and the lack of Aboriginal legal representation, were also actions put forward.

Though Prime Minister Harper and the provincial premiers have committed to a dialogue this upcoming fall to address the country's "Aboriginal situation," Jacobs fears that it is going to be another situation where her people will be discussed without the presence of a single one sitting at the table.

In her mind it was pretty much the same thing when it came to Northern Affairs' media manipulation and shameless self-promotion when it came to matrimonial land rights and repealing the Canadian Human Rights Act.

"Very specific recommendations that we as Aboriginal women made to the government about matrimonial real property that were not implemented in the legislation," said Jacobs.

Not only were the voices of those she represents not heard but in both scenarios Jacobs feels the government went ahead without any regard to Aboriginal rights or treaty rights in situations where traditional systems could have produced more solutions.

Like any other recent Aboriginal political gathering, talk of The Kelowna Accord echoed throughout the summit's hallways as did its feasibility in implementation.

"I can only go with what the women are saying and they are saying that they want it implemented. Until there is another process that we can use, this is what we have right now," said Jacobs.

Last year NWAC came out with the horrifying statistic that there were over 500 Aboriginal women in this country that were either missing or murdered and that their cases were not being pursued. Since that announcement not only has Canada received intense scrutiny from the international community but rather than seeing a turnaround, the numbers keep climbing which Jacobs says stems from "a lack of political will."

What is more alarming however is the frequency of the trafficking and prostitution of Canada's Aboriginal girls.

"FIRST NATIONS GIRLS ARE OVERREPRESENTED IN PROSTITUTION WITH AN ESPECIALLY HIGH NUMBER OF YOUTH RANGING FROM 14% - 60% ACROSS VARIOUS REGIONS IN CANADA."

First Peoples Child and Family Review, Domestic Sex Trafficking of Aboriginal Girls in Canada: Issues and Implications"

According to a 2007 study by Anupriya Sethi that appeared in the First Peoples Child and Family Review, titled "Domestic Sex Trafficking of Aboriginal Girls in Canada: Issues and Implications":

"First Nations girls are overrepresented in prostitution with an especially high number of youth ranging from 14% - 60% across various regions in Canada. National data in Canada reveals that 75% of Aboriginal girls under the age of 18 have experienced sexual abuse, 50% are under 14, and almost 25% are younger than 7 years of age. In Vancouver alone, 60% of sexually exploited youth are Aboriginal. One key informant [an unnamed frontline worker] reported that children as young as 9 are sexually exploited in Saskatoon and the average age of being forced into prostitution is 11 or 12."

Though Jacobs has been in talks with Liberal Senator Roméo Dallaire who chairs the Committee against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth, she is still trying to fathom what is more outrageous about the situation. Whether it is worse that this situation exists and very little is being done about it or that there is an industry out there where Aboriginal children are a commodity and the media has not picked up on it.

Whereas the progress made at the summit was undeniable, its purpose was for the voices of Aboriginal women to be heard. While the host, Northwest Territories Premier Floyd Roland was in attendance, no other premier could attend because a cabinet retreat was called at the same time as the summit.

"I was actually thinking about this relationship we have with this government and sometimes I equate it to an abusive relationship. They insult us. They ignore us. They are silent on issues. They turn it around and blame it on us. Those are all sure signs of an abuser," said Jacobs.

A new star is now in the sky shining

KATE GABRIELLE MENUTAN CHARLES-SHARL

July 17, 2003 - July 19, 2008



We wish to thank you for expressing your sympathies at the time of the passing of our beloved daughter and little sister. The support shown during this time of sorrow has been greatly appreciated and most comforting. You will forever stay in our thoughts and prayers.

Thank you to;

Our family and friends in Mashteuatsh, Ouje and Ottawa. To the staff of the healing center of Ouje; nurses Martine Dallaire, Martin Lewis, Nathalie Beauchemin, Jean-Pierre, Regis, Eric and all other replacement nurses. To Doctor R. Déry. To the Social Services and staff. To the homecare attendant; Jeanny Icebound Capassit. To the hospital of Chibougamau Emergency's staff and the 3rd floor nurses and doctor's. To the Montreal Children Hospital Pediatricians; Johanne Morel, Ken Sailor, Helen Caron. Dr. Sam Daniel. And also to the 9th floor P.I.C.U. doctors & nurses.

Thank you also to the Eenuch Association, Eenou Company, Waspshooyan Childcare Center, the Ouje and Mistissini Police Department. The Cree Regional Authority Child & Family Services staff.

People of Ouje; thank you! You came to show your last respect to our daughter at our house. Thanks also for the food you brought each time. Thanks for all the money you have gathered.

To my adoptive sisters; Daisy, Alice, Theresa, Sophie, Louise, Cynthia, Mary, Margareth and brothers; Glenn, Wally, James, Norman, Phillip, Paul Shecapio, Allan, Lana Gull, Mr. & Mrs. Matthew Wapachee, Kenny and Madeleine Jolly from Nemaska, thank you so very much!

God bless you all.

We miss you very much our little angel.

Family of Harry and Anouk Sharl in Ouje-Bougoumou.

If you want to see our little angel please visit:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fb8gGo-cZfQ>

The 6th Annual CreeFest!

Music entertainment, workshops, contests, activities, a Pow Wow and a feast were all part of the 6th Annual CreeFest which took place in Cochrane, Ontario August 14-16.

Taykwa Tagamou First Nation, the town of Cochrane, the Mushkegowuk Council and Abitibi Projects joined together and organized three days of festivities that brought Elders, children, youth and artisans together to celebrate community spirit and culture.

On the first day, CreeFest held its opening ceremonies at 6pm followed by music and entertainment. Friday began at 10am with workshops, and at 6pm there were contests and activities for the people attending. On Saturday, there was a five-hour Pow Wow. Closing ceremonies began at 3pm followed by a community feast, activities and another music and entertainment-filled evening.

CreeFest welcomed over 1000 participants. "I am very pleased with our success," said Kara Louttit, the events coordinator. "I have been hearing great things from people who traveled from as far up the coast as Hudson Bay to attend. It was challenging but ultimately an amazing experience for me."

Moose Cree Elections

Moose Cree First Nation held its elections on August 9. Norman Hardisty was voted new Chief of Moose Cree First Nation with a total of 338 votes.

Right behind him were candidates Patricia Faries-Akiwenzie with 227 votes and Vern Cheechoo with 103 votes.

Also newly elected as Deputy Chief, Charlie Cheechoo won with 345 votes. The new Elder Councilor is Robert Vincent who received the most votes at 424. Gregory Rickard was voted Youth Councilor with a sum of 318 votes.

Other Councilors voted into office include Charlie Alisappi, Doreen Blackned, Earl Cheechoo, Richard Cheechoo, Bob Echum, Katherine Faries, George Lazarus, Pauline Rickard, Daisy Jane Sayers, Charles Small, Walter Turner and Peter Wesley.

Congratulations to the new Chief of Moose Cree First Nation and all those who have been elected to serve on the board!

New CRA rep in Mistissini

John Matoush has won the election to replace Matthew Coon Come as the Council Board Representative for the Cree Nation of Mistissini. The election, held June 25-26, was made necessary when Coon Come stepped down to fill a new position in the Cree Regional Authority's Trust Board. Matoush won with 216 votes to 97 votes for William Macleod.

Public Art Competition for First Nations Artists

The Ministère de la culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine and the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue will be integrating a piece of Native art with the First Nations Pavilion building on the UQAT campus in Val-d'Or

They are looking for pieces of art to make into a mural or an exterior bas-relief and have a budget of \$68,285. Any professional artist can participate but the purpose of the competition is to encourage and motivate First Nations artists.

Three people will be chosen to present their proposals. Each will receive \$1,500 while the finalist will be awarded \$15,000 for design copyright and reproduction rights of the winning work. The rest of the budget (\$48,785) will be used for the creation and installation of the artwork.

Artists who are interested must send a letter of intention, a CV and a portfolio of their artwork. The portfolio must include a maximum of 10 visual samples, in the form of photographs, slides or digital files (JPG format, 128 dpi maximum, 1024x1536 pixels, 600 to 800k). This must be accompanied by a descriptive list of the works indicating the name of the artist, the title of the work, its size and the year it was created.

Documents must be sent to Suzy Basile, Research Officer, Public Art Competition, Université du Québec en

Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Campus de Val-d'Or, 675 1st Avenue, Val-d'Or (QC) J9P 1Y3.

Ideas for Aboriginal economic development

The federal government wants the general public to know that everyone, Aboriginal or not, is welcomed to give his/her input to Indian and Northern Affairs on how to set-up a new framework for Aboriginal economic development.

The public is being asked to submit suggestions directly to INAC via its website, telephone or traditional mail before September 30.

This process is part of the federal government's commitment to deliver a new Aboriginal economic development framework by the end of 2008. The comments from the public are to serve as a dialogue guide for upcoming discussions between the government and Aboriginal groups and communities.

With INAC working under the ideology that increasing Aboriginal participation into the Canadian economy would be the most affective way to address the socio-economic gap between Aboriginals and the rest of Canadians, the decision is being welcomed by many.

According to the Regina Leader-Post, some Aboriginal leaders have already suggested that providing equal access to quality education on reserves and increasing post-secondary funding for First Nations students is a good place to start.

To help focus input, a discussion guide, titled "Toward a New Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development", was released early August and is also available on INAC's website.

Suggestions can be made by calling 1-800-567-9604, going to its website (www.ainc-inac.gc.ca), emailing (infopubs@ainc-inac.gc.ca), or sending regular mail to:

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0H4

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WHO NEEDS THE OLYMPICS?

THOUGH THEY MAY NOT HAVE COME HOME LADEN IN HARDWARE, THE EYOU ISTCHEE'S FINEST YOUNG ATHLETES MADE THEIR DEBUT AT THE NORTH AMERICAN INDIGENOUS GAMES AND A LASTING IMPRESSION ON THE WORLD.

By Amy German Photos Don Nicholls



For the first time since the games inception back in 1990, a delegation of Cree youth made their way to the 2008 North American Indigenous Games in the hopes of bringing back gold in honor of their people.

The seven-day event, held in Cowichan, B.C., saw more than 4,500 Aboriginal athletes and 3,000 cultural participants from across Canada and the United States, including 200 athletes from Quebec's Cree, Mohawk, Besamite and other Native communities under the moniker, The Eastern Door and the North.

In total, the collective indigenous groups from Quebec placed 6th overall, bringing home 86 medals – 34 gold, 26 silver and another 26 bronze. On top of their medals, at the event's closing ceremonies, The Eastern Door and the North were presented the prestigious John Fletcher Spirit Award, a carved paddle given to the team that demonstrated the spirit of teamwork, fair play, respect and integrity throughout the

games. The paddle has a Thunderbird carved into it so the team can set and see its goals.

Teams from the Cree Nation participated in softball and basketball with one participant in the swimming division. Though the softball and basketball teams faced a number of defeats, Mistissini's own Gabriel RabbitSkin won three gold and one silver medals in various swimming competitions.

"It was a great experience to be there and to see our young people full of smiles and enjoying themselves. Even though they faced defeats, they never gave up," said Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff.

According to Jeff Spencer, the executive director for the provincial organization responsible for bringing the Crees to the NAIG, Cowichan did a formidable job of hosting the event and put on a spectacular opening ceremony.

"About 5000 youth walked off the main street in Cowichan into the park at the cultural centre by the river. In Winnipeg, they did it in a stadium but here they did it traditionally, right

"IT WAS SUCH A SPECTACULAR THING. IT WAS A CULMINATION OF SPORTS AND CULTURE AT ITS BEST. THEY REALLY PUT ON A GREAT SHOW."

into a field and then everyone sat down. You were not in a stadium surrounded by concrete, but you were in the cultural area of the games," said Spencer.

"It was so wonderful. It felt like you were at the Native Olympics when the delegations marched in," said Don Nicholls, Cree Regional Authority Political Attaché for both the Deputy and Grand Chiefs.

For the games a stage had been constructed at the end of the field that was used for the opening ceremonies and for the cultural events put on throughout the duration of the games.

Spencer spoke highly of the professionalism of the traditional performances that were staged. "It was such a spectacular thing. It was a culmination of sports and culture at its best. They really put on a great show."

Iserhoff also stated how much the cultural performances added to the overall atmosphere of the event and how perhaps in the future the Cree Nation could become part of this aspect of the games as well.

Though there may not have been as many athletes from Quebec as other provinces, according to some, they still made an enthusiastic impression on the games.

"When I received the calls about the opening ceremonies, I was told that we were the craziest bunch of the group and throughout the games we were able to influence all of these decisions with the way we acted at the opening ceremonies. We were able to continue throughout that week, although we were losing games, we were still able to maintain a positive team atmosphere," said Gerard Longchap who coached the juvenile basketball team.

At the same time Longchap contends that the sheer magnitude of the games was a bit daunting for the Cree teams, never having participated in an event of such scale.

"Basketball has only been around for so many years in the Cree communities. We hardly ever played outside of our communities and here we were playing in front of cameras and a huge crowd and in front of girls. These boys had to shake off their jitters for two or three games to be able to play the competitive game that they play here at home," said Longchap.

Even though Longchap's team did not come out on top, what was most touching for him was how his team truly took to heart the wonderful opportunity it had been given. As the games drew to an end, many of the players expressed the desire to come back as coaches for the next games.

"That was my goal, to convince them that there are other people out there who need this opportunity," said Longchap.



NAIG also left a lasting impression on Chirstine Petawabano, the basketball team's manager. Though she admits that the competitiveness and the grand scale of the event may have been a little overwhelming for the athletes, in recognizing how little time the teams had to prepare prior to the event in comparison to some of the teams from other provinces and states, she was ultimately proud of the Cree youth's performance. Since her experience at the games, she has made a personal commitment to furthering Cree youth along for the next games to be held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 2011.

After some deliberations with representatives from the Eastern Door teams, they concluded that the inter Band games could serve as a qualifier for future NAIG competitions. They also concluded that different areas in the province could be responsible for different training sections such as the suggestion of Mistissini possibly being the centre for basketball and soccer due to its new sports complex.

"We are going to be looking at giving equal opportunities to Aboriginal youth throughout the province and I am going to be part of that committee. So I am going to be active for the inter Band games and also for the next NAIG," said Petawabano.

The recognition that the Crees could and perhaps should play a larger part in the upcoming NAIG rang true across the board.

It wasn't just that there were a number of categories that Cree participants could have excelled at from javelin throwing to rifle shooting to canoeing to volleyball but that the idea of what kind of an effect an intensive focus on athleticism would have on the communities.

Nicholls remarked on how all of the participants in the games had to sign a contract attesting to how they would not drink or smoke throughout the duration of the games. Setting a good example, the athlete's coaches and chaperones also signed contracts as a sign of support.

"YOU ARE TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOU ARE DEVELOPING ALL OF THESE SKILLS AND CHARACTERISTICS TO HELP YOU SUCCEED IN LIFE."

"There is something to be said about sports and recreation that when you are in training and with goals to achieve that you are not drinking, you are not smoking, and you are not staying up late. You are taking care of yourself and you are developing all of these skills and characteristics to help you succeed in life. So I was really impressed with that," said Nicholls.

Nicholls went on to describe how kids whose lives revolve around training end up in bed at night to prepare to meet their training goals the following day as opposed to hanging out late at night. The quality of these athletes' participation in school might also improve as they would feel more refreshed as a result of a healthier lifestyle and being more goal-oriented.

Iserhoff also wondered what kind of effect increased competitive athleticism would have on the Cree Nation considering some of the health difficulties that abound in the North, particularly diabetes.

"If we promote this kind of thing in the community, perhaps the numbers that we are seeing now for diabetes could go down. It would help the kids both with their motivation and their health and their self-esteem," said Iserhoff.

What stands in the way of this kind of progress however is both manpower and funding to not only get the events organized but to get the athletes to them.

For as much as Iserhoff could not stress the need for the parents of these athletes to be available to them for support, there is also a need for those within the Nation to devote their time and energy to coaching and organizing these events. Though Iserhoff said that a secretary of state from the Canadian government who was in attendance at NAIG mentioned how an extra \$160 million would be going into sports for all of Canada, there was no indication of how much would be earmarked for Indigenous athletes.



Still, the 2008 NAIG produced many intense and remarkable moments for those who were there. What stood out most for Longchap was when Gabriel RabbitSkin won two gold medals in one day.

Upon receiving his medals, Longchap overheard RabbitSkin say to a Mohawk journalist, that he wanted to dedicate his games and performance to the Crees of Mistissini.

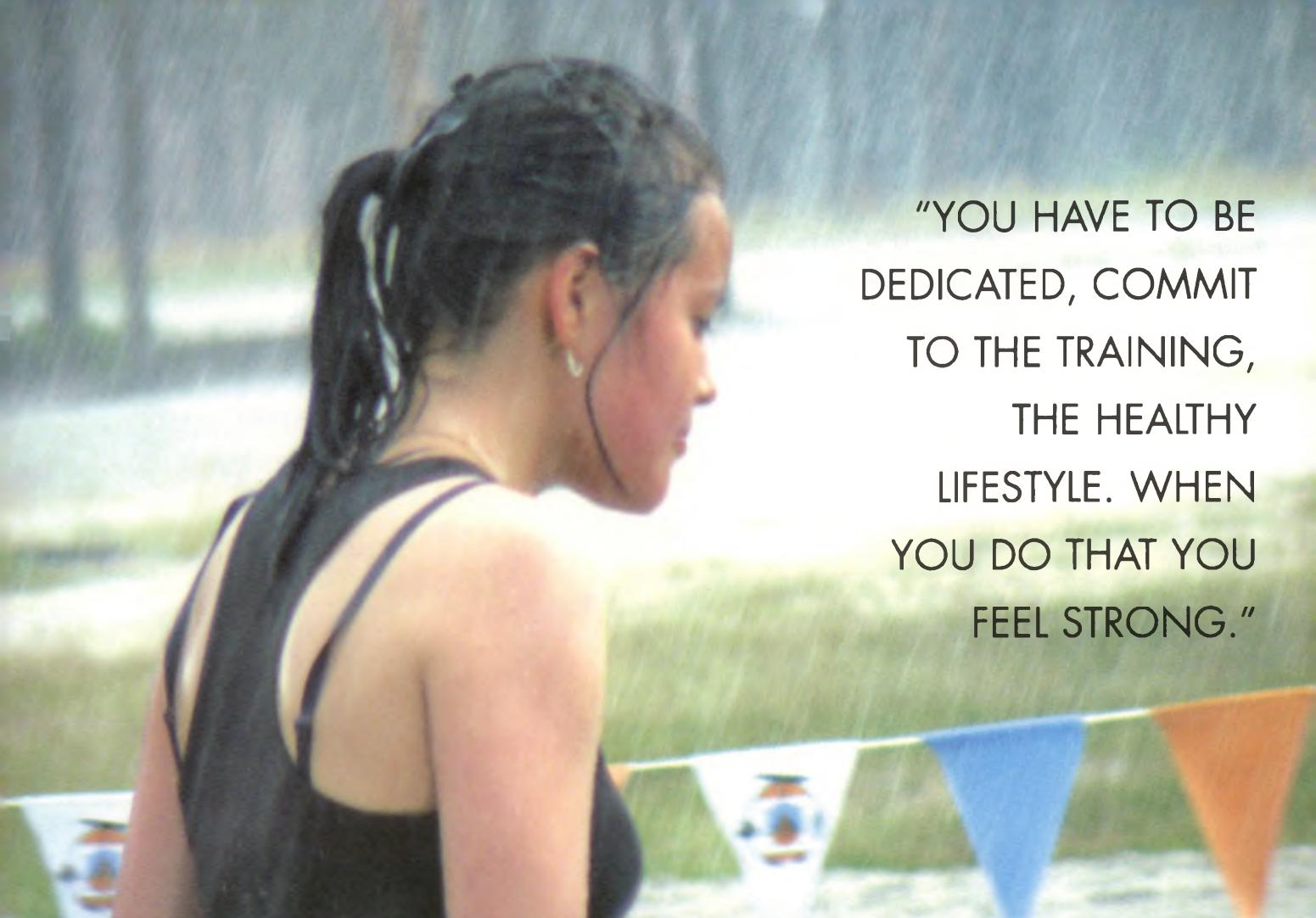
"When he said that the whole Cree Nation blew up and got even crazier and rowdier than usual," said Longchap, laughing at how it wasn't a wonder the Eastern Door and the North won the spirit award.

At the same time, not every memory from this event revolved around competition as Iserhoff described a truly emotional and special interaction he had with one BC local while out for dinner with the Crees from the team.

As team members enjoyed their meal while conversing in Cree amongst each other, a woman approached their table with tears in her eyes. "She said, 'I am so happy that you guys came here and I am able to hear young people speak their own language.' It had a huge effect on her and that is something that the Cree Nation should be proud of. I told her that over 95% of our people still speak Cree," said Iserhoff with pride.

With Quebec's Crees making their debut at the NAIG, the eyes of those who attended and participated are now turned towards the 2011 event in Milwaukee. Having been commended for their spirit and good sportsmanship, these athletes came home with many lessons to share and an enthusiasm that will surely ripple throughout the communities.

For those future hopefuls, keep in mind, this is only the beginning.



"YOU HAVE TO BE
DEDICATED, COMMIT
TO THE TRAINING,
THE HEALTHY
LIFESTYLE. WHEN
YOU DO THAT YOU
FEEL STRONG."

FITNESS CHALLENGE 2008: WHEN THE TOUGH GET GOING

**The Nemaska Fitness Challenge attracted a good crowd,
but a challenge goes out to other communities to participate.**

Story by Neil Diamond Photos by Jim Blackned, Tera Diamond, Neil Diamond and Richard Lawson



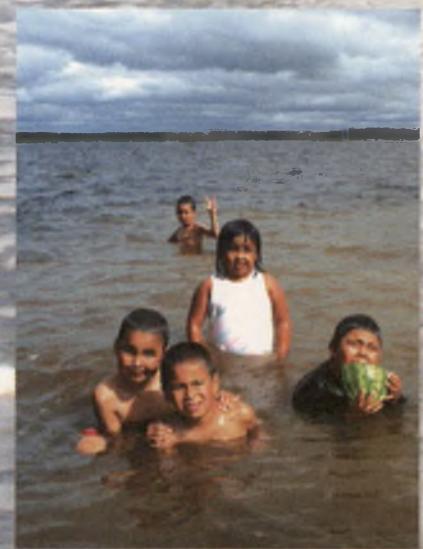
Nemaska. The height of summer. Johnny Cash's "Jackson" is blaring through the speakers. Three days and many miles of swimming, biking, portaging, canoeing and running lie ahead in this community's annual Fitness Challenge.

The 13th annual competition brings together some old faces from races past: John Gunner, Stanley Neeposh, Lena Petawabano, Jimmy Coonishish, Rod Blueboy and Wally RabbitSkin amongst others. Also presenting themselves this year, some young guns, like Holly Visitor, Sebastien Neeposh, Tyra Tanoush and Richard Jolly.

There is a festive air to the afternoon as the competition gets underway. Children splash in the lake. People feast on Robert Kitchen's moose burgers as the organizers hawk raffle tickets and sirens scream for no apparent reason. Elders have brought their chairs with them and sit shaded under Nemaska's many trees.

The men's competitive starts again with the toughest portion of the race, the 1-km swim. Waskaganish's reigning champ

"IT'S FUN THOUGH.
IT'S NOT REALLY A
COMPETITION PER SAY
IT'S MORE LIKE LET'S
SEE HOW MUCH I
CAN PUSH YOU, AND
YOU PUSH ME".



Rod Blueboy is first out of Champion Lake with a time of 18:20. Fellow hometown boy Reginald Blackned trails close behind at 18:24. Next out of the water is Stephane Gunner with a time of 20:22. Swimming is not Stanley Neeposh's strength. He trails more than two minutes behind Gunner. Neeposh winces in pain as he ascends the steps of the dock and dashes toward his bike. His foot bleeds and a nurse is called. He loses valuable time and strength as the wound is bound. Unfazed he jumps on his bike and continues on.

A cool wind blows out on Champion Lake as the race continues with the portaging and paddling of a 47lb canoe. The distance: a 1-km portage followed by 2kms of canoeing. Gunner wins the portage but is beaten by Blueboy out on the water. Stanley Neeposh is still a contender as he comes in second in his canoe.

The final leg of the race will be on foot, a grueling 10kms. What will happen to Stanley with his hurt foot? Who's leading? It is a race in itself trying to keep track of what's happening. Only the ones following the racers in their vehicles appear to know.



Oliver Jolly takes care of the only major security problem at the event.





"Next year, I'm going to train," a happy but exhausted Evelyn Shecapio said.

Announcer Matthew Swallow seems to be more concerned with getting people to eat and the timekeepers have better things to do than keeping reporters informed. Other topics bandied about: Rod Blueboy is unnerved by the new young guns, according Jim Blackned. Stanley Neeposh holds the virtually unbreakable record of 12 consecutive races in the competition's 13 years.

Amidst all the confusion Stephane Gunner crosses the finish line as the new champion. Asked if he's going to Disney World with his winnings he smiles widely and says, "I'm going to pay my rent."

Reginald Blackned comes in second and receives an emotional welcome from his proud mom and Waskaganish entourage. Former champ Rod Blueboy finishes third. Perhaps Rod was right about the young guns. Stanley Gunner is way back and pauses within sight of the finish with another lap to go. He looks like he's ready to throw in the towel. His wife Emma and the team from Mistissini shout encouragement and he takes off running again. He finishes the race with a final time of 2hrs 40 mins and 6 seconds.

And this is just the Men's Competitive. Over the three days there are numerous events: the Under-13 Triathlon (the inaugural year and very successful), the 13-17 Triathlon, the Women's Competitive (Lena Petawabano won her third consecutive title), and the Relay Competition. Plenty of supporters are out each day, even during the pouring rain of Friday's Mini Challenge. As the athletes cross the finish line they are met with handshakes and hugs from family, friends and fellow athletes.

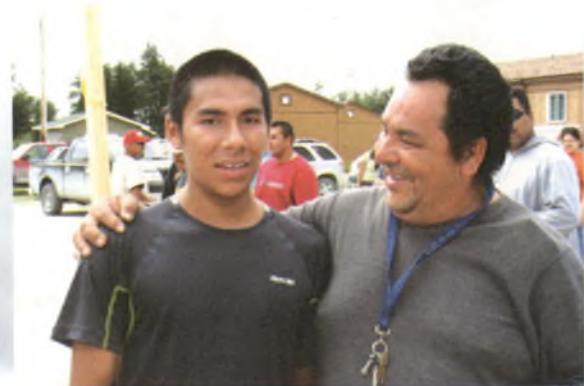


A nasty rumour swirled around while the race was on that the Nemaska Fitness Challenge will be run for only two more years. Something or other about lack of funding. Yet there seems to be as much interest in the event as there was a decade ago. An educated guess revealed at least 200 spectators and participants following the races with much enthusiasm. Many people commented that they would like to see other communities field athletes, sounding a challenge to their neighbours. Someone suggested maybe the games could include more traditional challenges: fire-making, tea-boiling, bannock-baking, rabbit-skinning and fish-gutting competition for the Elders. Let's see some of those young guns try that!

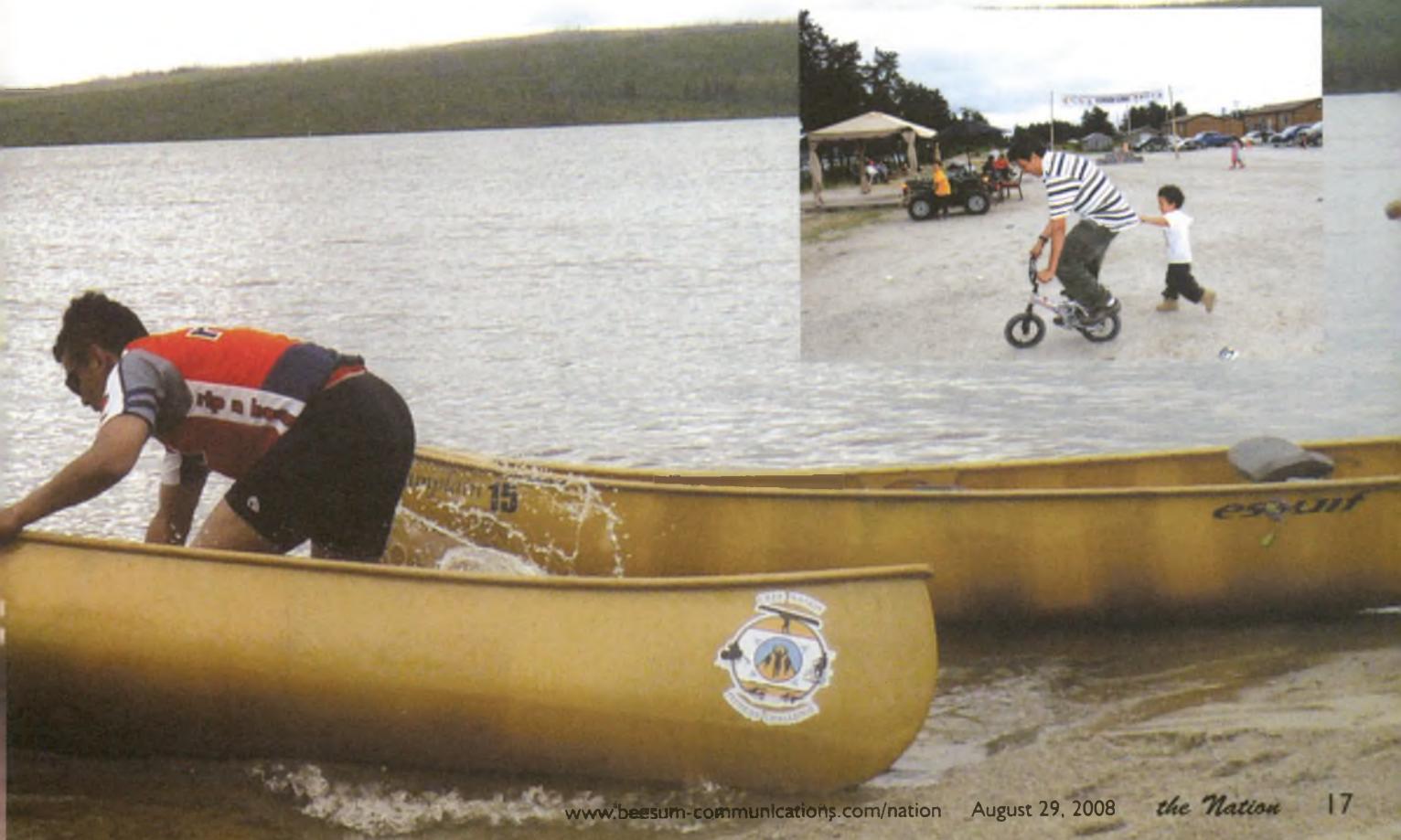
Founding member of the Nemaska Fitness Challenge Rodney Hester recalled a story that speaks to the lasting importance of this event. An Elder who brought his son to the competition year after year was speaking at the 10th anniversary banquet. During his speech, the Elder broke down saying the event had helped keep his son clean and free from alcohol and drugs. "You have to be dedicated, commit to the training, the healthy lifestyle. When you do that you feel strong," said Hester.

Special thanks go out to Jim Blackned and Tera Diamond for the use of their cameras (ours was wet) and their photos.

ASKED IF HE'S GOING TO DISNEY WORLD WITH HIS Winnings Stephane smiles widely and says, "I'M GOING TO PAY MY RENT."



At age 21, Stephane Gunner is possibly the youngest champion ever.



CREE NATION FITNESS CHALLENGE 2008

The organizing committee members of the 13th edition of the Cree Nation Fitness Challenge would like to thank profusely all the athletes who competed this year. Your determination, strength and courage are an example to follow to sustain a healthy lifestyle and we are proud of all of you.

We would like also to thank all the sponsors for their generosity. And a huge thank you goes out to all the volunteers, to the Police Services, the Public Safety, the Fire Department, the Road Maintenance, the Sports Complex, the Community members and to Rueben Jolly and his Crew, who helped made this event possible once again.

Meegwetch and see you next year for the 14th edition!



Women's competitive

Name	From	Final Time	Position
Lina Petawabano	Mistissini	1:56:43	1
Sophie Matoush	Mistissini	2:20:03	2

Men's competitive

Name	From	Final Time	Position
Stephen Gunner	Mistissini	2:12:11	1
Reginald Blackned	Waskaganish	2:16:55	2
Rod Blueboy	Waskaganish	2:20:49	3
Stanley Neeposh	Mistissini	2:40:06	4

Men's Team Relay

Name	From	Final Time	Position
J. Matoush	Mistissini	3:21:02	1
S. Neeposh	Mistissini	3:34:17	2
R. Blueboy	Waskaganish	3:35:20	3
B. Coonishish	Mistissini	3:50:51	4
S. Blackned	Nemaska	4:19:03	5

Women's Team Relay

Name	From	Final Time	Position
Mistissini # 1	L. Petawabano	2:40:45	1
Mistissini # 2	S. Longchap	2:44:06	2
Mistissini # 3	C. Neeposh	2:54:34	3

Mini Challenge Girls

Name	From	Final Time	Position
Courtney Neeposh	Mistissini	1:18:16	1
Wapinjuksh			
Wapabee	Nemaska	1:41:05	2

Mini Challenge Boys

Name	From	Final Time	Position
Stephen Hester	Waskaganish	1:04:04	1
Benoit Longchap	Mistissini	1:12:44	2
Terence Hester	Waskaganish	1:29:21	3

Mini Triathlon Girls

Name	From	Final Time	Position
Holly Visiton	Nemaska	00:26:05	1
Emma-Rose Jolly	Nemaska	00:32:37	2
Tyra Tanoush	Nemaska	00:34:15	3
Rosalyna Jolly	Nemaska	00:36:10	4

Mini Triathlon Boys

Name	From	Final Time	Position
Richard Jolly	Nemaska	00:23:42	1
Sebastien Neeposh	Mistissini	00:24:22	2
Clayton Jolly	Nemaska	00:25:52	3
Ricky Blackned	Nemaska	00:29:20	4
Zachary Jolly	Nemaska	00:29:59	5
Curtis Jolly	Nemaska	00:30:08	6

Recreational Women

Name	From	Final Time	Position
Shirley Longchap	Mistissini	1:45:28	1
Victoria Mianscum	Mistissini	1:47:43	2
Lizzie-Anne			
Mettaweskum	Nemaska	2:00:59	3
Evelyne Tanoush	Nemaska	2:02:44	4
Evelyne Shecapio	Mistissini	2:09:22	5

Recreational Men

Name	From	Final Time	Position
Derland Shecapio	Waskaganish	1:36:25	1
Aaron Blackned	Waskaganish	1:39:06	2
Jimmy Matoush	Mistissini	1:43:18	3
Silas Blackned	Nemaska	1:44:32	4
Jimmy Coonishish	Mistissini	1:44:48	5
Gerald Coon Come	Mistissini	1:45:55	6
George Blacksmith	Mistissini	1:54:25	7
Thomas Stevens	Waskaganish	1:56:40	8



Who Would You Like To See Compete in the Fitness Challenge?



"My daughter Lorraine because she's big and strong, bigger than me."

Victoria Mianscum, Mistissini



"My girlfriend, Evelyn, because it was her first experience this year and she loved it."

Gerald Coon Come, 23, Mistissini



"At least one participant from each community. This is a challenge to all the communities! Bring it on!"

Oliver Jolly, 35, Nemaska



"Jody House. So he can beat his old record."

Patterson Hester, Waskaganish



"Jackson Jolly. Before he was injured he was the fastest runner in Nemaska."

Tera Diamond, 26, Nemaska



"The youth because they're going to be our future leaders."

*Lena Petawabano,
Mistissini*



"Inuit representation. Nation to nation!"

Robert Kitchen, Waswanipi



"My grandson Antoine, so he'll follow in my footsteps."

John Gunner, Mistissini

"Former Chief Ted Moses."

Jim Blackned 38, Nemaska



"The Grand Chief. He should be part of everything, he represents the Cree nation and he should be here."

Sam Etapp, Mistissini



"Adam Beach. Cause he's hot! Put him in a Speedo!"

Katrina Orr, 24, Nemaska



"My grandson Antoine, so he'll follow in my footsteps."

John Gunner, Mistissini



"Martin Sureau. To see him suffer!"

Hattie Wapachee, Nemaska



Shrugs and sucks on freezie.

Joy Jolly, 3, Nemaska



"Kenny Gunner, cause he's mighty strong."

Randy Gunner, Mistissini



Mary Jane George and Tracey Coonishish battle it out.

BRAWN POWER CREE ARM-WRESTLING CHAMPS NEED SUPPORT IN ORDER TO ATTEND THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN KELOWNA, BC.

By Ndiamon and Jeditat Matoush

The air was electric inside Nemaska's fitness centre the night of August 2. A large crowd had gathered in the basketball arena to witness the strongest wrists and forearms in Cree territory vie for the right to be called Arm Wrestling Champion of the Quebec Cree Nation. As the night progressed the cheering turned into a roar accompanied by the pounding of tables and the walls.

Mary Jane George and Tracey Coonishish drove the gathering into a frenzy as they battled like bloodthirsty Amazon gladiators, their legs braced against the steel table. After several attempts their fight had to be postponed when they locked in a hard fought tie. But they would come back to fight again. The men in the audience shook in their seats. In the end George Anne Coonishish would fall to Christina Trapper from Mistissini.

The crowd teased big John Bosum with a loud cheer when he lost easily his first time up wrestling a smaller guy Elton Salt. He reacted sheepishly as he went back to his refereeing role. Later, he claimed some wily strategizing. "I let him beat me so he could take on Randy Gunner." Bosum would redeem him-

self and place first when he went up against the lefties. "My weak hand." He said.

Hometown hero and Mistissini's champ from a few weeks back, Abel Jolly went up against his fiercest competitor, the hulking Randy Gunner with wrists the size of Tom Cruise's thighs. The two warriors faced each other like enraged bulls. There is about an 80lb difference between them but it didn't make much of a difference. Jolly is all about technique while Gunner is clearly brute strength. Jolly, it seems, had been saving his energy until the end and with lightning speed he hooked and slammed Gunner's arm down winning another championship.

This was 27-year-old middleweight Jolly's fourth meet. "I used to arm wrestle in bars for fun and drinks," he smiled.

The show went late into the night ending well past midnight. Most of the crowd, close to 200, stayed until the very end. "There's more interest in the sport now," said Bosum.

Bosum has been arm wrestling competitively for four years but has trained for seven years. Jolly and Bosum are both competing in the provincials in Quebec City August 16. Bosum

hopes to attend the Nationals in Moose Jaw August 30 and would like to go on to the World Championship in Kelowna, BC, sometime in December.

...a few weeks later...

Contacted on August 19, just days after his fight in Quebec City, Bosum sounded positive and excited. He ranked fourth in the right arm section of his category and fifth in the left arm. "I qualified for the Nationals in Moose Jaw," he announced proudly.

Bosum described the competition as being "cool and fun." What better words could be used to express what it was like to compete against former World Champion Dennis Dubreuil and former Canadian Champion Sylvain Perron.

As for Jolly, he ranked second in the middleweight category. Not bad for a guy who arm wrestled in bars for free drinks! Unable to reach Jolly, Bosum commented on whether he would go to Moose Jaw as well. "I asked Abel to come with me, the people in Quebec City said that if he went he could make it into the top five of his category in all of Canada," Bosum said. "He thinks it is too far, but maybe he'll change his mind and come anyways."

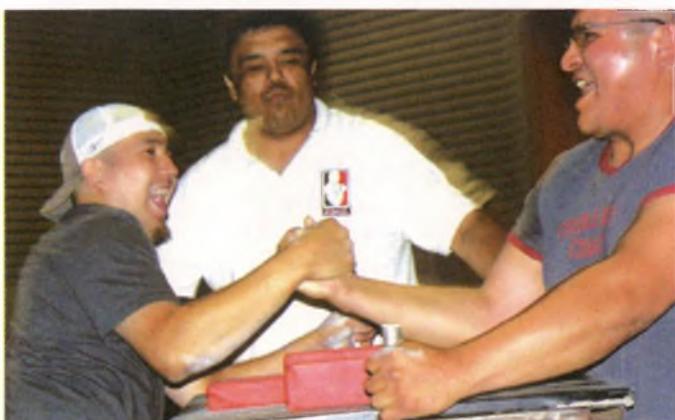
When asked if he was looking forward to going to Moose Jaw on August 30 Bosum let out a long sigh. "Honestly, it is a big effort for me to get there. I need sponsors and nobody is returning my phone calls. I can't go there by myself. The community says it wants to help us but it makes it so complicated. I am doing this for the youth, to motivate them because we can't always rely on social services and the band council. People are making it very hard for me though."

Bosum has a good point. The Cree people are always being encouraged to reach high, to be successful and to participate in local activities. Both Bosum and Jolly have done that and have now reached the next level. Without help from the communities for sponsorship their journey stops here.

"I'm a nobody," Bosum continues. "I am just practicing what I preach, for the youth, but I need help."

Even if they are not able to make it to Moose Jaw, hopefully someone out there will realize that the Cree people, especially the youth, need to see Bosum and Jolly make it and will reach out to them so they can continue on their path to success.

"Abel Jolly could make it into the top five of his category in all of Canada!"



Abel Jolly versus Randy Gunner with John Bosum refereeing



Abel Jolly toys with a Nation representative

Assessing the Assessment

Though shortened by a day, the Grand Council's annual General Assembly was able to cover all the issues faced by the Cree Nation.

By Sonny Orr Photos by Don Nicholls and Sonny Orr

On the day the delegates were due to arrive from the south to attend the Grand Council of Eeyou Istchee, low-lying clouds blanketed the airstrip making it difficult for Air CreeBec's Dash-8 to land. After two attempts, the landing was aborted.

The same thing happened to the two charters destined for the main event that Cree politicians look forward to. The Annual General Assembly is an event that recounts the previous year's activities and, of course, explains how all the money was spent.

The following day, with beautiful skies and pristine visibility, the planes landed and the delegates hustled over to the Samson Dick Memorial Arena to ready themselves for a gruelling two-day ordeal of meetings spent rehashing items from the past year.

The first item on the agenda was deferred to accommodate the participants who needed to leave the conference later that day so that they could make their presentations to the delegations from all 10 communities. The first up was former Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, who addressed the topic of the new agreement with the federal government and touched a bit on Cree governance.

The next presenter, Raymond Chabot Grant Thornton, represented by Sylvain Faucher, discussed the financial statements of the GCCEI-Cree Regional Authority.

The audit showed that there were no real discrepancies or financial problems. However the deferred revenues seemed a little extraordinary at \$15 million plus which represents \$11 million more than the previous year and the amounts due to the communities at \$21 million plus nearly double that of the year before. Another interesting note is the Cree Pension Plan, where the amounts for keeping the pension plan alive increased dramatically, creating forecasted deficits of \$2.5 million until 2016. The CRA's annual pension was \$1,096,623.

What was really eye-opening were the salaries for the executive members which ranged from \$164,309 to \$321,808 for a total of \$1,278,759. This makes it even more appealing and worthwhile to run for office!

The agenda then focused on the ratification of the financial statements, resolutions and minutes of the year's meetings held by the GCCEI-CRA including the Council Board. Presentations of the Cree Entities reports were then brought up, mainly for the Cree School Board, Cree Board of Health and Social Services, the Cree Trappers Association, the Board of Compensation and Creeco and its subsidiaries. The latter two were deferred.

The Cree School Board presentation highlighted its 30-year anniversary. The CSB has managed quite well financially, with a surplus of \$3.3 million and a notable increase in stu-

dent attendance, in particular, Chisasibi's James Bay Eeyou School with 1,035 students. At the post-secondary level, 434 students were enrolled in universities, colleges and CEGEPs across Canada. Another highlight was the allocation of \$1,797,900 for renovating and repairing schools and teachers' residences.

WHAT WAS REALLY EYE-OPENING WERE THE SALARIES FOR THE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS WHICH RANGED FROM \$164,309 TO \$321,808

The Cree Board of Health and Social Services' presentation focused on creating more jobs throughout the Eeyou Istchee. One issue brought up were the Patient Services facilities in the south and how some residences were not up to par. A suggestion was made to examine the Inuit-run facilities in Montreal.



where an apartment building houses all the patients from the North, including serving them country food, which is sorely missed by long-term Cree patients staying in the city.

Grand Chief Matthew Mukash presented for the Cree Nation Government, showing us that there is definite movement towards the development of a working framework to comply with the New Relationship Agreement with both provincial and federal governments. The proposed structure was outlined, with additional departments to be administered under the CRA, notably Justice and Correctional Services, Public Security / Eeyou Eenou Police Force with a few more positions to be filled, mainly the Deputy Director General, and Eeyou Eenou Police Commission and an Ethics Commission and Ombudsman. The Grand Chief stated that a document will be presented in the coming year focussing on the proposed development of Cree Nation Government.

There was also an emotional plea for making poverty a thing of the past. This brought up the topic of how our people, even though we have successfully managed to negotiate many working agreements with the various governments, agencies and other external sources of funding, that everyone who is Cree knows at least one person who is related to them or is a good friend, living in poverty, or has to struggle to provide for themselves or their families. The question was raised whether we are all united or is there a two-tiered system that continually feeds the well-to-do families with more wealth while at the same time the poor get poorer. This is an issue

that no one wants to tackle, but it was brought up at the assembly, not to exclude the poor when it comes to Cree Nation Government and nation building.

Unfortunately, Chief Clarence Louie of the Osoyoos First Nation from Penticton, B.C., turned out to be a no-show. It would have been interesting to hear this man talk about how he managed to turn his community around from practically 100% unemployment to nearly 100% employment by using economic development as the way to self-sufficiency and community pride. Perhaps another time.

One of the most impressive participants was a young lad from Waskaganish, who had won the public-speaking contest there. Introduced by Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff, the young man spoke very frankly about the Cree and their lifestyles, and about the evolution from who we were in the past to who we are today. After finishing his stirring speech, he received a standing ovation and loud applause filled the arena.

The host community, situated in beautiful Whapmagoostui, surprised many delegates with its natural scenery and wide-open spaces. Many, who were in Whapmagoostui for the first time, appreciated the exceptional good weather, often stating that their southern weather was quite dreary and had rained the entire summer. The fact that Whapmagoostui-Kuujjuaraapik has a 2km-long beach, two Aboriginal cultures and basically two of everything else impressed many of the delegates.



Grand Council of the Cree Annual General Assembly Resolutions

The recording secretary was Kenny Loon. This year's Resolution Committee was composed of Don Nicholls, Bill Namagoose, Matthew Swallow and Stacey Bear. The agenda, financial statements and minutes were approved and ratified. Raymond, Chabot, Grant, Thornton did the audit and were approved to do next year's audit.

2008-07, RE: CREE TREATMENT CENTER

WHEREAS the delegates of the 2008 GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly acknowledge and recognize that there are social issues with respect to alcohol and substance abuse addictions in the Cree communities;

WHEREAS alcohol and substance abuse issues have a negative impact on the social well-being of Cree families, schools and communities;

WHEREAS the delegates of the 2008 GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly recognize the need to develop treatment facilities and programs within the Cree Nation;

WHEREAS the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay has the mandate to provide health and social services to the Cree population of Eeyou Istchee;

WHEREAS the Cree population would benefit from the development of permanent facilities in Eeyou Istchee to deal with alcohol and substance abuse issues;

WHEREAS the development of Cree facilities would enable the Cree people to access such programs more readily, and the CBHSSJB to integrate Cree language, culture, values and ways into treatment programs;

BE IT RESOLVED: THAT the delegates of the 2008 GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly hereby request the Executive Office of the GCCEI/CRA to meet with the leadership of the CBHSSJB to establish a Cree treatment center for alcohol and substance abuse issues within Eeyou Istchee; THAT the delegates of the 2008 GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly hereby request that the Cree treatment center for alcohol and substance abuse issues be tabled at the next GCCEI/CRA Council Board meeting as a priority for the Cree Nation.

2008-08, Re: HOUSING NEEDS SIMILAR TO SPECIALIZED SERVICES

WHEREAS the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement entered into on November 11, 1975 provides for and guarantees the provision of health and social services to the Cree of Eeyou Istchee;

WHEREAS the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB) is the body established pursuant to the said Agreement (Treaty) through which certain of the said health and social services are to be delivered;

WHEREAS the rights provided for in the JBNQA is protected by Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution, 1982;

WHEREAS the Cree local governments are primarily responsible for the provision of shelter to their respective members; WHEREAS the CBHSSJB provides certain specialized health



and social services only in certain communities for various reasons;

WHEREAS this situation has exacerbated the housing shortage in certain communities;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: THAT each of the entities who have the primary responsibility for the other specific incidental needs of the Cree, give immediate and serious consideration to providing the service or facility, as the case may be, as and when required until the situation improves; THAT more specifically each of the communities directly affected, as well as the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee as a collectivity consent to the allocation of funding from the Capital "A", the Cree-Federal New Relationship Agreement and the Cree Hydro-Quebec New Relationship Agreement to provide the shelter needs of the Cree who are not members of the community where the specialized service is provided and in the case of the other facilities that financial resources available to the Cree of Eeyou Istchee be also made available as appropriate.

2008-09, Re: EDUCATIONAL RIGHT OF CREE PEOPLE

WHEREAS the Cree School Board was created to serve the educational needs of the Cree in Eeyou Istchee;

WHEREAS the drop-out rate in the elementary, secondary and post-secondary institutions is extremely high and is unacceptable;

WHEREAS the success rate of students depends to a large degree, on the level of support, both morally and financially, that is received from family, friends, counselors and the Cree School Board;

BE IT RESOLVED: THAT every effort be made to ensure that all the necessary requirements to enter into the post-secondary programs be provided to all students, both academically and financially;

THAT financial support to each student be provided on a timely basis with the least possible delay;

THAT the criteria for receiving financial assistance from the Cree School Board be adjusted or altered to meet the needs of the students, not the other way around;

THAT the GCC(EI) ensure that this is complied with.

2008-10, Re: HEMODIALYSIS MACHINE FOR WASKAGANISH FIRST NATION

WHEREAS the Crees of the Waskaganish First Nation held the local Annual General Assembly in Waskaganish, Quebec on July 2, 3, 7 & 8, 2008;

WHEREAS the members expressed their concern on the increasing number of people that are being sent out for hemodialysis due to kidney problems;

WHEREAS the members of the Waskaganish First Nation deem it appropriate that a hemodialysis machine be situated in the community of Waskaganish;

WHEREAS the members of the Waskaganish First Nation further deem it appropriate that discussions with the Cree Health Board be proceeded as soon as possible

WHEREAS the members of the Waskaganish First Nation passed a resolution, MCWFN-2008-2009-11, agreeing with and fully supporting the need for a hemodialysis machine, and mandating Council to do all things necessary to realize this objective;

WHEREAS the delegates from the Waskaganish First Nation have requested the support of the delegates at the 2008 GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly for this request;

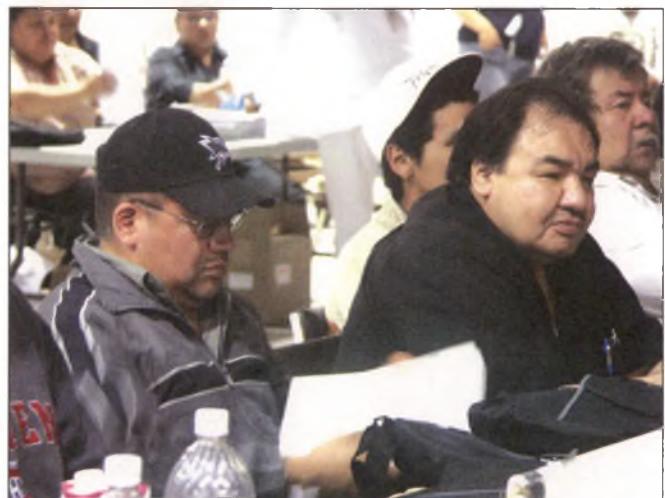
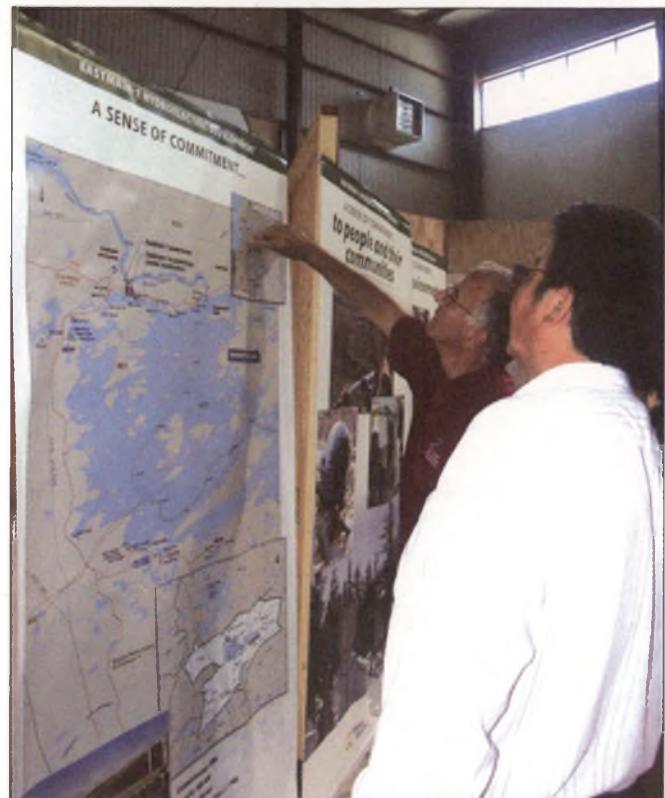
BE IT RESOLVED: THAT the delegates of the 2008 GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly hereby support the request of the delegates from the Waskaganish First Nation for a hemodialysis machine;

THAT the delegates of the 2008 GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly hereby request that the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay meet with representatives of the Waskaganish First Nation with respect to their request for a hemodialysis machine and make this a priority.

2008-11, Re: CREE SPORTS & RECREATION FOUNDATION

WHEREAS sports and recreation promote a healthy lifestyle for Cree youth in the communities;

WHEREAS many opportunities exist for Cree athletes and





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Cree Regional Authority
Administration régionale Cris
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(Δ̄d̄d̄ d̄d̄)
Grand Council of the Crees
(Eeyou Istchee)
Grand conseil des Cris
(Eeyou Istchee)



North American Indigenous Games 2008

The Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) congratulates all the Cree athletes, coaches, and parents who participated in the 2008 edition of the North American Indigenous Games in Cowichan, British Columbia held from August 3-10.

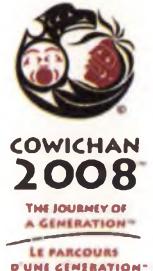
Your efforts, courage and dedication to your sport have paid off and success has met you in Cowichan. Each and every one of you represented the Cree Nation very well and we are extremely proud of all of your accomplishments.

A special congratulations goes to swimmer Gabriel RabbitSkin who brought home 2 gold medals.

The Cree delegation who is part of the The Eastern Door and the North (composed of Cree, Mohawk, Innu and other First Nations Youth in Quebec) were honoured at the closing ceremonies and received an honorary award called the John Fletcher Spirit Award which is presented to the team that best demonstrates the spirit of teamwork, fair play, respect, and integrity throughout the competition. Congratulations to the Eastern Door and the North!

Matthew Mukash
Grand Chief

Ashley Iserhoff
Deputy Grand Chief



youth to participate in Sports and Recreational activities or development programs exist;
WHEREAS development schools, programs and training require support to lift Cree youth and athletes up who want to excel in sports and recreational activities;

WHEREAS there are many opportunities for Cree youth to participate in competitions and games;

WHEREAS it is difficult for many athletes and Cree youth to raise required funds to participate in programs, competitions and events;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: THAT the delegates of the 2008 Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Regional Authority hereby request that the Executive Office of the GCCEI/CRA look into establishing a Cree Sports and Recreation Foundation to provide support and enable opportunities for Cree athletes and youth.

THAT the delegates of the 2008 Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Regional Authority request the Executive Office to bring their findings to a meeting of the GCCEI/CRA Council/Board.

2008-12, Re: RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SETTLEMENT INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

WHEREAS a majority of the Cree people of certain generations faced a great trauma with the residential school system;
WHEREAS the Indian Residential School Settlement come into force on September 19, 2007;

WHEREAS the Independent Assessment Process (IAP) is part of the overall settlement of claims arising from the settlement;

WHEREAS a number of Cree intend to file a claim under this process;

WHEREAS these individuals do not have easy access, in particular to legal advice to assist them with processing and filing a claim with this process;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: THAT the Cree Nation through the appropriate organization provide specific assistance, legal and administrative to individuals who intend to avail themselves of this process as soon as possible.



2008-13, Re: SOCIAL WELLNESS TASK FORCE
WHEREAS many impacts have been felt by the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee due to the fast pace of change within the territory and culture of the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee;
WHEREAS certain changes from the Cree traditional hunting lifestyles have resulted in the negative impact of the overall health status of the Cree population;
WHEREAS the traditional norms of social wellness that have existed for many generations have been greatly affected and that the concept and practice of social wellness needs to be relearned and reintroduced into the Cree way of life;
WHEREAS the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee has inherent and legislative rights to govern and maintain all aspects of its health and well-being;
WHEREAS the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CHBSSJB) has the mandate for the delivery of health and social services for the beneficiaries and other residents within the area of its jurisdiction;
WHEREAS the CBHSSJB recognizes the need to work in collaboration with the other Cree entities due to the many determinants that affect the health of the Cree population;
WHEREAS the CBHSSJB has approached the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee), the Cree School Board, the Cree Nation Youth Council and the Regional Elders Council to propose a project in consolidation to address the issue of Social Wellness with the Cree population;
WHEREAS the aforementioned entities have shown their commitment to work with the CBHSSJB in pursuing such a project;
WHEREAS such work involves a process design with clear objectives; a comprehensive, inclusive assessment/review of all existing programs related to social well being; to explore the rationale of the current design and paradigm of such programs; doing program research using a culturally appropriate, ethnomethodological design reflective of Cree reality; doing policy research at the national and international level with regard to social policy as it exists among indigenous peoples; doing an exercise of policy making design with the core social institutions of Cree society; employing the appropriate principles and paradigm, and ensuring complementarity of such



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design among Cree entities; to go in a process of program design using the results of the previous phases;
WHEREAS such project and process will require a sustained involvement of all entities engaged in the form of a Task Force represented by identified Cree entities to guide the entire process;

BE IT RESOLVED: THAT the 2008 Annual General Assembly of the members of the Cree Regional Authority hereby acknowledges and endorses a project to establish a Cree policy on Social Wellness for the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee; THAT the members of the 2008 Annual General Assembly hereby mandate the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay, the Cree School Board, the Cree Nation Youth Council and the Regional Elders Council to work in collaboration in the form of a Cree Policy on Social Wellness Task Force along with the interagency of other Cree entities to guide the entire process;

THAT it is agreed that a Joint Working Group be formed from these entities to prepare a draft Terms of Reference and project design of the entire process to be approved by each of the entities involved;

THAT the Social Wellness Task Force be formed to assume its mandate as identified, once the Terms of Reference have been approved by all entities concerned;

THAT the members of the Social Wellness Task Force make periodic and scheduled reports and updates to their respective organizations as described in the Task Force mandate; That the Chairpersons of each of the entities involved ensure their respective organizations are apprised of the results and updates of the project during the entire process.

2008-14, Re: ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

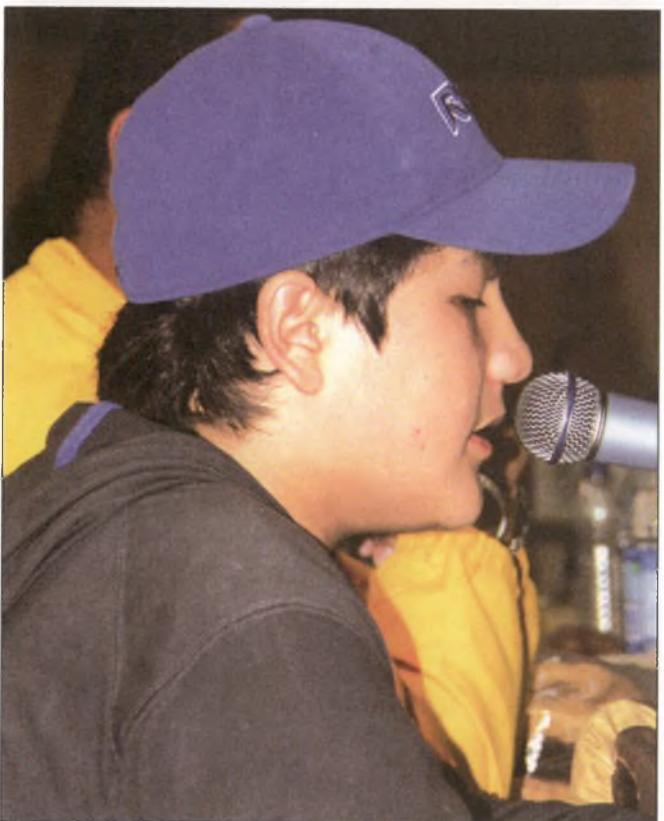
WHEREAS the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay is charged with the delivery of health and social services to the people of Eeyou Istchee;

WHEREAS there is a need to provide health and social services in Eeyou Istchee;

WHEREAS there is a need to hold an Annual General Assembly on Health and Social Services to inform the Cree communities on the status of the development funds allocated through the Health Agreement 2004-2009;

WHEREAS the Cree population needs to be informed on the progress made on the implementation plan as approved by the Board of Directors, on the evolution of the organization chart, the status of current social issues and matters and furthermore, to table the annual report and financial statements of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay each year for the next 3 years;

BE IT RESOLVED: THAT the members of the 2008 Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority Annual General Assembly request that the Council Board of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority affirm and recognize the importance of social and





health issues that impact the Cree Nation as a whole; THAT the members of the 2008 Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority Annual General Assembly further request that a Annual General Assembly on Health and Social Services be held each year for the next 3 years and that is inclusive of Cree men, women, youth and Elders;

THAT the members of the 2008 Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority General Assembly further request that the Cree Health Board and Social Services and Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority, work closely together on addressing the health and social issues affecting the Cree communities and Cree youth;

THAT the members of the 2008 Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority Annual General Assembly hereby mandate the Council Board of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority to provide support necessary and for the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay to seek funds for Annual General Assembly on Health and Social issues;

THAT the members of the 2008 Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority Annual General Assembly hereby mandate the Council Board of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

2008-15, Re: CREE WILDLIFE PROTECTION OFFICERS

WHEREAS there is recreational hunting, fishing and wildlife activities within Eeyou Istchee by non-Cree people;

WHEREAS laws and regulations were established to conserve wildlife, fish, and fauna;

WHEREAS Agreements exist to protect Cree traditional rights to hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering activities within Eeyou Istchee;

WHEREAS a substantial portion of the Cree Nation continues to practice these traditional activities throughout the territory;

WHEREAS Cree Wildlife Protection Officers are trained to enforce laws and regulations within the territory, and their knowledge of Cree traplines and ways are important;

WHEREAS in some areas these Cree Wildlife Officers are employed on a part time basis, and therefore have to seek other employment, the Cree Nation loses important trained individuals;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: THAT the delegates of the 2008 Annual General Assembly of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and the Cree Regional Authority hereby request that the GCCEI/CRA look into possibilities of retaining these Cree Wildlife Protection Officers to work cooperatively with the Cree Trappers' Association and other Cree entities.



2008-16, RE: FOUNDATION TO ADDRESS POVERTY IN EYOU ISTCHEE

WHEREAS the delegates of the GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly recognize and acknowledge that poverty exists within the Cree Nation and Cree communities ;

WHEREAS the membership of the Cree Nation recognize that the eradication of poverty within Eeyou Istchee should be a priority for the Cree leadership and organizations;

WHEREAS membership of the Cree Nation would like to take effective steps to eliminate poverty within the Cree communities;

WHEREAS there are national organizations such as Red Cross, food banks, and other human rights based organizations established to alleviate the situation of poverty in Canadian society;

WHEREAS the representatives of the Cree Nation attending the GCCEI/CRA Assembly recognize the need for a foundation or organizations to address the issue of poverty in the Cree Nation;

WHEREAS poverty contributes to malnutrition, disease, epidemics, inattentiveness in school, neglect, abuse and other social problems within Cree communities;

WHEREAS the delegates of the GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly recognize the need for an organization to be in place to respond in cases of emergencies or events within the Nation to ensure basic needs of shelter, food and water; WHEREAS the delegates of the GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly recognize to establish such foundations and organizations funding is required;

WHEREAS an investment of 1% of annual funding from the Cree communities and entities is not only an investment into our people but it also is into improving the standard of living, student success, social well-being, and health of our people;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: THAT the delegates of the GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly recommend that all Cree communities and Cree entities contribute annual funding to establish and support a foundation and organization to eliminate poverty within the Cree Nation;

THAT the delegates of the GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly recognize and affirm the importance of the situa-



tion of poverty within the Cree communities, and request that the Executive Office of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) table such an issue at the next meeting of the GCCEI/CRA Council/Board;

THAT the delegates of the GCCEI/CRA Annual General Assembly request that the Executive Office of the GCCEI and CRA work further to determine the extent and impacts of poverty within the Cree Nation.

2008-17, Re: MONITORING CONTAMINANTS RESULTING FROM THE DIKE COLLAPSE LOCATED IN CHAPAIIS

WHEREAS the Public Health Department of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay is responsible for environment health in Eeyou Istchee;

WHEREAS there is a need to continue the monitoring of possible contaminants and to ensure that the levels of contaminants do not affect the health and safety of the population of Waswanipi and surrounding region;

WHEREAS the members of the 2008 Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority Annual General Assembly requests that the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay continue to ensure that the mandate of Public Health is fully carried out until such time there is no visible threat to the health and safety of the population of Waswanipi and surrounding region;

BE IT RESOLVED: THAT the members of the 2008 Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority Annual General Assembly request that the Council Board of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority affirm and recognize the importance of this responsibility to the Cree Nation as a whole;

THAT the members of the 2008 Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority General Assembly further request that the Cree Health Board and Social Services of James Bay and the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority, work closely together in ensuring that this mandate is carried out on behalf the population of Waswanipi and the Cree Nation as a whole;

THAT the members of the 2008 Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority Annual General Assembly hereby mandate the Council Board of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority to support and defend the decision and resolution of the people of Waswanipi (see annex Waswanipi General Assembly Resolution) passed at their General Assembly in July 2008;



THAT the members of the 2008 Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority Annual General Assembly hereby mandate the Council Board of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee)/Cree Regional Authority and the Cree Health Board and Social Services of James Bay to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

Briefs continued from page 9

Taxing reserves

According to the Institute on Governance (IOG), the Ottawa-based non-profit think-tank that specializes in governance, more First Nations communities should be taxing themselves as a means of solving on-reserve economic problems, such as housing and water quality.

The 46-page report, *In Praise of Taxes: The Link Between Taxation and Good Governance in a First Nations Context*, discusses how the additional revenues generated by taxation would not only pay for enhanced services but taxation would make band governments more accountable to their citizens.

Under taxation, IOG argues that services could be improved on the basis that the new taxing governments would have more of an incentive to try to increase the prosperity of

their population since residents would go from being simple consumers to "revenue sources."

The report suggests various taxation sources ranging from property to personal income to various forms of sales taxes similar to provincial and federal sales taxes.

According to IOG, taxation could help promote more equality on reserves as there tends to be income discrepancies where a minority of members possess jobs and thus garner a greater income. Taxation could be a means of redistributing wealth depending on the needs of the individual.

While there are several First Nations communities in Canada that have imposed some forms of taxation within reserves, the report acknowledges how its philosophy may not be widely received as there would be a fear that taxation by band governments would erode the federal government's responsibility towards Indians.

Forgotten Teens

I have a question for all the adults everywhere pretty much, whether you're in Montreal or just good ole Mistissini. Why are the teens of today forgotten? I mean, they're being brushed off and no one notices.

Our education is getting messed up and the adults don't notice because they're not even there to see it. Us teens are the ones who see how messed up our future looks for our education and what is done about that? Nothing. The school system has been messed up for years and I haven't seen one change, like one big change, to help with it. What's up with that? I just don't get it.

Teens today are more opinionated and more willing to do something about it then waiting around for people who are supposed to be doing it. No, we are not complicated. No, we are not spoiled. We just wanna make a difference.

Why do you think teens drink? Do you really think that your teen is just out to get you and nothing else? No, it's not like that at all. Yeah, we get the edge of freedom when we first hit our teens, but it's the kinda freedom that's safe and has absolutely nothing to do with alcohol. But then things start turning to not so good.

Complicated things happen when you're a teen and at that point you really don't know what to do. So we end up drinking one time. Then the thought of it seems good when it really isn't. That's where it gets tricky. The parents come in and start yelling and blaming instead of asking, "How was it?" "Did you really enjoy it that much?" "What happened?" "Did you fight?" "Are you ok?" "Did you enjoy it enough to do it again?"

Those are the questions that a just-starting-to-drink teen needs to hear because those questions can save a teen from becoming an alcoholic. But parents, I'll tell you one thing you can't keep your kid in a box. What makes you think makes them depressed? No, I'm not saying that you should tell your kid to go out and smoke and drink. Just let them go every now and then. Just make sure they can be honest with you before you trust them enough to stay out all night. Like I said opinionated, I wanna help.

Yeah, you'll hear from me again. I'm not leaving this world until I know I have made a difference for everyone.

Stacy Taylor,
Mistissini

Take care of the children

Just read about the Kativik School Board and the going away of most of their teachers due to so much, I am not surprised. It's a decadence that will soon touch the Cree people due to a lack of authority from the parents.

I mean, for what amount of money, salary and else a teacher will go through being spit at and slapped and well so

much more.... No, thanks! I need money like everybody does but, I was there in the mid-90s and, well IPL, was pinched so hard on my cheek, almost cried but I kept on teaching these two guys who ended up in jail. But listen, they didn't commit suicide, they are still there and respect me to this day because I understood them. Today, they would offer me 3 or 4 or 7 times what they did in the mid-90s and I would say, No thanks!

Parents take on the children's side, if you tell the student to do something, whatever it is, you are always wrong. So, it's not always a question of money, it's a question of caring for the child and it is not understood. What will happen next?

In my point of view... decadence, vandalism, disrespect, theft and all. Parents take care of your kids. Ask the good lord to help you!

Dan Masty

A letter by Mary Voyageur

Summer 1978 was a fun time, like all the other summers as I long as I can remember.

It was a very special year because a new baby was born in June – my cousin, Jimmy Paul. He was such a gift to me. How could I have known what a comfort he would be to me in the months and years to come?

Every summer from June to late August, our family stayed at Camp Louis Joliette where there were about eight tents/cabins of families.

As children, we had one adventure after another. We'd go fishing, boat riding, and I loved to go blueberry picking with my grandma and other families from the camps.

My mom and dad had jobs. My mom cleaned guest cabins, and my dad was as a fishing guide. My Uncle Sam and I used to hang around together. We would watch my mom do laundry from a nearby bush area. Once she was out of sight we would go into the laundry room to steal small guest soaps and face towels to wash our faces in the river. My parents would be gone from 5am to late in the evening. They ate their breakfast at the cafeteria. The main work camp was about 3 or 4 kms away. I would listen to them leaving by boat.

My dad would come back from breakfast with fruit he got from the kitchen. He never bought lots – just one apple, a banana or an orange. Every time he came back from breakfast we, his children, would still be asleep or pretending to be. I remember hearing his motor and I knew he was coming back with little treats. My dad would bring the fruit in and while we were still covered in blankets he would throw the delicious gift. I would smile if it fell on me. I can still remember the feeling of this prize falling on me. Baba



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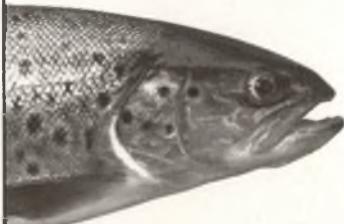
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would tell us to make sure we shared between all six of us girls. I had three older sisters and two younger ones. It was a busy summer for all.

We children were happy and free to run around. In those days, some parents worked at a central camp while others stayed to care for the children and homes. I recall many funny moments when we were a lot younger. For example, we had just started to explore the world. My Uncle Sam and I, both of us the same age, would argue about how the world is shaped. I believed that the world was round. Uncle Sam was convinced it was flat. During one of our arguments he challenged me. "Okay! Tomorrow we leave early in the morning and go to the end of the world!" I asked him why he thought this could possibly happen.

He replied, "Because from Chibougamau to Mistissini there is a road but from Mistissini it stops so we are close to the end of the world." I agreed to go on this exciting journey! Early the next morning I prepared my lunch, bannock and tea. I was to see the end of the world! I used a dishcloth to wrap my lunch and I tied it to a stick. I carried it on my shoulder. Sam did the same. We walked but we never reached the end of the world. We returned home exhausted! Uncle Sam had an axe with him to mark our trail so we didn't get lost.

I am drifting off here a bit but I wanted to share this. I have even more funny stories similar to this. Like I said it was a busy and happy summer.

By August our parents accompanied us to Mistissini for school. Mom, dad and my three older sisters planned to travel back to Camp Louis Joliette to clean up. My younger sisters, Jane and Helen, and I would be staying with our grandparents.

My sister Nancy was to return the next day with my Aunt Laurie and late Uncle Abraham with their young son Isaac. As my parents and two oldest sisters Louise and Madeleine were ready to leave, we all helped to carry their supplies to bring to the camp. We were having fun as usual and I kept asking my mom if I could come with them. I loved the camp. I did not want to go to school. But my mom told me to stay and watch my younger sisters.

I remember how the weather was really nice; a soft breeze was blowing and the sun felt warm on my face as they left. We watched them leave. Once they were out of sight, we went to our grandma's house.

The next day Nancy left with my aunt and uncle. A couple of days passed. We heard word that my parents had not returned to camp. A search started. People asked us questions about where we camped last. We told them near the mouth of Rupert River (Mistissini Lake) where our dad had set his fishing net.

At first, I thought they were probably camping somewhere to gather more fish or berries. I never thought anything bad would happen. By this time, at our grandparents'

house, people came visiting us. I thought, "What are they doing here?" I would head off to the store to get away from them.

A couple of days after the search started, I had just got home and I saw my uncle Ronnie Loon going into my grandparents' house with his head bowed down. I was curious since I never saw him there before. I waited a bit to go in as I did not want him to see me. Once, he was in, I slowly entered. Back then, all homes were the same in Mistissini – three-bedroom log cabins. The walls separating each room did not reach the ceiling. One could hear conversations and even though my grandparents' room had the only closed door, I could still make out what was said.

By this time, Nancy was back in the community as well as my aunt and uncle. It was a strange day. There was a lot of whispering. I got a bit annoyed. I felt excluded. I went into the middle room and I listened as Ronnie Loon told my grandparents they had found the boat. It looked like it had capsized. My parents, two sisters and my adopted precious little brother Clifford were gone – all five of them drowned just like that.

Oh! How my heart just broke into many pieces! I was crying and Nancy ran to me and asked, "What are they saying?" She was also crying, and I remember telling her, "We will never see mom and dad again in this world." We held each other.

Then we were called to our grandparents' room. My poor grandma! I looked into her eyes. I could see such pain. I stopped crying. I was in shock. I was numb and I thought, "Is this really happening? Why? What happened? Too windy?"

By this time, lots of people came to give us their support but, in fact, something very hurtful occurred during that time. Instead of encouraging me to express my grief, people advised me, "Don't cry. Your grandma will become sick if you cry."

I did not want someone else I loved and needed so much to die, so I swallowed my terrible pain. I was entirely numb. I shut myself down so I would not cry. I wish these well-intentioned people could have felt the pain I was carrying. Still, I obeyed them.

We hung around together my sisters and I. If I got too overwhelmed I would sneak out, go downhill and stand by the shore where our family had gathered last. I would look towards where they last headed. Once, some people followed me. I hid in the bushes. I stayed there for a very long time. I so wished that I was in a dream. I wished I could wake up any minute and the nightmare would be over. Everything would be okay. I was completely changed. From a happy child, I became one who did not care anymore. A part of me died.

It took me a long time to enjoy the things I loved doing. After a few months passed, I wanted to be the happy person I was before. I smiled but felt broken inside. I was raised

the Nation

– from Eeyou Istchee to Mongolia



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Christian. I still prayed but it did not feel like it used to. One night, I was thinking of my family. I missed them so! I talked to God, and I told him, "Show me where my family is." I fell asleep and woke up the next morning feeling a lot better.

I had a dream that I was standing outside. It was a cloudy day but sunny. I looked up and saw faces smiling down on me. I knew then my family was happy where they were. I said a prayer asking God to help me through this. "You took my family, I need your help," I told him.

I planned our future. I will one day have a job and support myself, I thought. I will take care of my sisters when I am 18. I started earning money through babysitting.

I can say life was difficult but I was always determined that things would change for the better. In my teenage years, I started to drink. I was angry.

I still carried a lot of pain. I was bitter. I always wanted to hide my feelings from my siblings. I supported them with clothes and winter wear but I was not there to help them emotionally. I went to high school in Chibougamau, left Secondary III, and went to Ottawa for secretarial and book-keeping courses.

Once I completed my studies I returned home and worked as a secretary-receptionist. I told Nancy, "We are going to apply for a house. If we get one, we will keep our youngest sister, Helen."

We got the house and furniture. It was not easy. There were obstacles but we did not give up.

After my parents died, life for all of us was not easy. There was lots of alcohol involved in my family and I witnessed and experienced violence and verbal abuse. I became even more determined that one day this will pass. I did not want to be part of it.

My grandparents were great people, especially my grandpa. What would I have done without him? I loved them both so much! I hated alcohol yet I still drank. I did not fully understand life nor did I understand myself.

After working about four years, I decided to further my education and I completed an accounting program in Ottawa. I was promoted to accounting at my workplace.

Then, in my 20s my life began to change. I was always sad. I did not want to drink anymore. Yet, heartbreak events from my earlier life started to pop up. Memories I had hidden came back to me.

While my parents were still alive and hunting in the bush in the winters, I boarded with close relatives our family trusted. They abused me sexually, physically and verbally. These painful memories of undeserved beatings, spankings, being screamed at and enduring hunger flooded into my heart. They were shameful memories.

Around this time, my niece, Julie, was born. Her birth just melted my heart. I was happy again. I love her so very, very much!

I started to change my life around. I found people and resources to help me deal with my pain. It was not easy but with the help of a mighty and powerful God, I did it! I also began to deal with my grief. My personal healing journey was hard. It was tough.

Someone once told me, "When you reach a hard place, tell yourself, 'This too shall pass'." It became my motto. Or, I would sing "What a Friend we have in Jesus" and yes! I learned what a privilege it is to carry everything in prayer! Thank you Lord!

Today, from time to time, I think of my lost family. It was very tough to let them go, especially my dad. I did not want to release him for a long, long time. When, I finally said goodbye, in the midst of my tears I envisioned him smiling at me.

Suddenly everything was okay.

I like to encourage people not to hold back tears. Tears are gifts given to us by God, to help us release our pain. I should never have been told not to cry. I should have been encouraged to weep and grieve as soon as I could. It would have helped me.

I am grateful that my dad taught me about God. He told me to look at my surroundings, at the rivers, the trees and the animals. God made them. He even taught me to listen to the birds. He said that God is taking care of us, just as He does the birds. I am very thankful for my father's teachings.

Once in while I go back to the places where we used to live as a family. I smile as I remember the sweet memories of my parents, some funny, some sad. They are all life experiences that shaped my world. I was always taught to respect people and to help them. These teachings I reclaimed. I came back to life.

I have been on my healing journey for some time now, and the painful issues I have carried have become lighter. They will never go away. But in sharing them with others who listen I have become the person I was before my parents died.

I love life! I love my family very much. Sometimes, I imagine what my parents would look like now. My dad was tall. I picture him with grey hair and wrinkles on his face.

Yet, I shrug off this idea off because I want to remember him as he was – a handsome man! He walked firmly with a shy smile and was always ready to crack a joke with me.

Just as God gave the gift of Jimmy Paul to us in June 1978, and the treasure of my niece, Julie, in 1989, I am constantly aware of the Graces of God. Treasures which began with the delicious gifts of fruit my father gave me continue to fall.

This morning as I awoke I heard a bird singing right outside my window. It was very close. I know it sang just for me.

Mary Voyageur

UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

All Creatures Great And Small

by Xavier Kataquapit

There is nothing like spending a hot summer day near the water's edge. I enjoy as much time as I can swimming but there are many responsibilities that keep me from cooling off in a crystal clean northern lake. Recently I took on the job of fixing an old lake-side dock which was a chore that allowed me to get some work done and be in the water at the same time.

Under a blazing hot sun and a looming storm in the northern sky, I set about my job of fixing up a decade's worth of neglect. As with anything, the demolition was simple but then I got down to the hard work of figuring out how to raise a dock that had settled into the lake bottom. I waded into the cool water and even though it was hot, I was able to work for hours without breaking too much of a sweat. However, I also met up with a creature that I have always dreaded. It was the Poh-Kwa-Chee-Meh-Oo, the Cree word for the leech or bloodsucker.

As I waded into knee-deep water, I worked as hard as I could for a few minutes, jumped back onto the remainder of dry dock, did a leech check around my feet and my legs and then went back in. About every second leech check I found a wormy Poh-Kwa-Chee-Meh-Oo firmly attached to one of my toes or my calf and gorging itself with my blood. This sight has always been disgusting to me. In reality you don't really feel a leech when it decides to attach to you and it is not dangerous but still I think it is mainly the thought that this little creature is sucking out precious blood.

I am like most people up the coast as we Cree dread the sight of leeches. When you come from the western edge of James Bay where the landscape is an endless expanse of marsh, mushkeg and swamp, leeches are everywhere and people quickly find ways of avoiding these little life-forms. We were taught to avoid any of the nearby lakes where weed-filled shores abounded with leeches. When we wanted to go swimming, we chose the Attawapiskat River and we stayed in moving water where leeches seldom ventured.

All of my leech phobias came back to me when I decided to rebuild the old dock. I had the time and interest to notice the leech world. Large leeches that measured about six inches in length swam by as I worked but for some reason they didn't bother with me. The tiny ones were the culprits that attached themselves to me. Mostly they snuck in between my toes.

I worked quickly so that I would not have to spend so much time in the water and weeds. There were moments

as I worked that I became frustrated in the midst of a constant bombardment from mosquitoes and my ongoing anxiety over being attacked by the leeches. At times I felt that the flying bloodsuckers had taken over the space I worked in.

After a few hours in this predicament I soon began to prefer the leeches. Mosquitoes truly are bothersome. They come to you with that nasty high-pitched sound that let's you know a bite is on the way. Then it painfully stabs into your skin and draws your blood. The result is pain, itching and sometimes the appearance of an agitating welt.

Leeches, on the other hand, are quite sophisticated and much more considerate in their need for stealing a little blood. The leech stealthily attaches itself to your skin, then it administers an anesthetic so you don't feel any bite at all. At the same time the leech releases an anti-clogging serum that allows for the free flow of blood. When the leech gets its fill it simply drops off.

I learned through some research that the best way to remove a leech or bloodsucker is to use your finger nails to pinch its head so that it releases its grip and detaches itself from your skin. Back home, we used cigarettes, lighters, salt or hot embers to remove leeches. These solutions are a little dangerous as they cause the leech to regurgitate or vomit the blood it is sucking back into you. This can lead to infection in the wound.

On the dock I stubbed my toe and it swelled up and was very painful. I soon found myself limping with this little injury. Still, I worked on happily repairing the old dock. At one point I realized that my toe seemed to have mended. When I took the time to check out my little injury I was surprised to find a tiny leech planted right on my injured toe.

I immediately removed it and tossed it back into the water. Then I noticed that the swelling where the leech had been sucking my blood had disappeared and my injury was pretty much remedied. The blood flowed freely from its little bite for a few minutes. My pain subsided. It dawned on me that my little bloodsucking friend had indeed done me a favour.

As a matter of fact, leeches have been used for centuries for all sorts of medical purposes relating to ailments involving blood. I am not saying that the next time I stub my toe I will be running for the nearest lake to find a leech but I do have a certain kind of appreciation for these little blood-suckers. They are another wonderful example of the good that Mother Earth provides in all creatures great and small. It's up to us to notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE



Conseil Cri de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James
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Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

Please take notice that **ELECTIONS** for the office of Chairperson for the Cree Board of Health and Social Service of James Bay has been called.

The present is in accordance with the Election By-Law of the Cree Health Board enacted on June 13, 2008, stating that one member of the Board of Directors shall be the Cree representative elected by and from the members of the Cree Regional Authority.

The person, so elected shall be, ex-officio, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Cree Health Board for a term of four (4) years.

Qualifications to Vote.

The qualification for eligibility to vote in the elections is as follows:

- a) To be a Cree beneficiary of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.
- b) To be of the age of majority at the date of the elections (18 years of age on September 23, 2008).
- c) Not to be affected by any legal incapacity.

Qualifications for Office.

The qualifications of Candidates for office of the Chairperson of are the same as the qualifications to vote, save that:

- No one who is an employee or practices a profession with the Cree Health Board may be a candidate elected as the Chairperson, unless that person resigns or ceases to practice with the Board upon being elected.
- Anyone who acts as a Returning or Assistant Returning Officer for these elections may not be a candidate.

Nomination Procedures.

Only persons who meet the qualifications and who is nominated in writing by fifteen (15) eligible voters on the nomination form provided may be a candidate for Chairperson.

The nomination form must be filed with the Returning Officer at least fifteen days prior to the date set for the Election date of **Tuesday, September 23, 2008** by mail, telecopier, or e-mail.

The deadline for submission of the nomination forms is at **5:00 P.M. on Monday September 8, 2008** Please be advised that nominations received after the posted time will not be accepted.

The nominees will have until **5:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 18, 2008** to inform the Electoral Officer whether to accept or decline his/her nomination.

The Returning Officer shall specify the dates, the time and places of the advance and travelling polls and polling Stations at a later date.

The nomination forms can be obtained from the Local Returning Officers that have been appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer as per the attached schedule or from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer at:

Lawrence Jimiken
Chief Electoral Officer
1 Lakeshore Road
Nemaska, Quebec
JOY 3B0

Tel: (819) 673-2512 ext. 233
Fax: (819) 673-2542
E-mail: lawrjimi@hotmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE



Conseil Cri de la santé et des services sociaux de la Baie James
Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay

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CLASSIFIEDS

GRADUATIONS



Congratulations to our son **Conrad Mianscum** in obtaining his SSD in french at PDN in Chibougamau. We are proud of you son. Do pursue further education. Your dream is not far off in the horizon—it is within you. Stir up that gift in you. We thank our Heavenly Father for keeping you safe all these years and the years to come. GO and face your giants—Deuteronomy 31:6 We love you! Mom and Dad

BIRTHS

Congratulations to my parents James & Lina Neeposh on the safe arrival of their 8th child. Another baby boy, Jamison Wallou Rylan, born in Gatineau on August 16 at 6:27am. He's truly a beautiful blessing from God. Love you guys! Your only daughter & son-in-law, Queenie & Harry.

Congratulations to our parents James & Lina Neeposh for the arrival of our baby brother, Jamison Wallou Rylan. We are so happy to have another newborn in the family! We love you & Baby

Jamison! Love, all the proud brothers in Gatineau (Gilbert, Bedabin, Shaun & Mark)

BIRTHDAYS

We would like to wish our baby girl a Happy 3rd birthday on August 30 '08. She is a very special little girl, she loves to dance, sing and also she is very good at bossing around her daddy. Her name is **KYRA JIMIKIN**. HAPPY BIRTHDAY BABYGIRL, we love you sooo much. From Mom and Dad.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to my baby sister Kyra Audrey Jimikin on Aug. 30 '08. Happy birthday and many more to come. Love ya, baby sis. From Urion.

Happy Birthday to my brothers: Quincy Neeposh on August 15, Eugene Neeposh on August 21, and Gilbert Neeposh on August 26. Happy Birthday to Hillory Kitchen on August 17. Many more birthdays to come. Happy Anniversary to my Grandparents, Boyce & Flora Trapper on August 15. Love you all so much! Love, Harry & Queenie Ottereyes

Happy Birthday to my mother, Elizabeth Herodier on August 11, and to my dad Roderick, on August 22, and Happy Anniversary too, man, can't stop, on August 23, I hope you will have many more, love u mom, dad, as always, Christopher,.....I say the same too, for my grandma

and grandpa, Akian, love u's too, miss u's.....

Happy Birthday to my mom Sarah on August 20, love you so much moosh, take care and I will be back soon enough before you know it, Akiansh, love u k. Rapping, dancing and acting in Ottawa, and yeah, singing too, enjoying the holidays with dad.....

ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Belated 7th Anniversary to my husband, Harry Ottereyes on August 11, 2008. Thank you for everything. I love you with all my heart. Your wife, Queenie Ottereyes

Happy Belated 47th Anniversary to my Grandparents, Philip & Maggie Neeposh on August 11, 2008. We love you both so much! Love, Harry & Queenie Ottereyes

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Where to get help: bilingual, anonymous, confidential and free phone services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Kid's Help Phone Line: 1-800-668-6868 (www.kidshelp-phone.ca)

Youth helpline: 1-800-263-2266 (www.teljeunes.com)

Parent helpline: 1-800-361-5085 (www.parenthelpline.ca)

Drugs: help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.drogue-aidereference.qc.ca)

Gambling: help and reference: 1-800-265-2626 (www.info-reference.qc.ca)

S.O.S. Conjugal Violence: 1-800-363-9010 (www.sosviolenceconjugale.com)

Health and Sexuality resources center:

1-888-855-7432 (Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm) (www.criss.org)

Gay Helpline: 1-888-505-1010 (Monday to Friday, 8 am to 3 am and Saturday-Sunday, 11 am to 3 am)

The Native Women's Shelter of Montreal:

1-866-403-4688. (www.nwsm.info)

Residential School Survivors:

A 24 hour toll-free crisis line is available to provide immediate emotional assistance and can be reached 24-hours a day, seven days a week: 1-866-925-4419. Other support services and information for survivors is available on the AFN website at: <http://www.afn.ca/residentialschools/resources.html>



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JOB OPPORTUNITY

Data & Technical Officer

Niskamoon Corporation

Objective:

To enter accumulated and ongoing data pertaining to project proposals approved by the Niskamoon Board of Directors into the Niskamoon Information Management System (NIMS) database. To accurately enter geo-referenced information into the Cree Geo-Portal for public access and consultation.

To assist the Communications & Administration Officer with the maintenance and updating of the Niskamoon Corporation website.

Successful candidate will be trained to learn properties and applications of the NIMS database, Cree GeoPortal, and Niskamoon website. Once training complete, candidate will be asked to travel to all nine (9) communities of Eeyou Istchee to collect data from each local office.

In relation to NIMS Database and GeoPortal:

- * Receive and register records and other documents for data capture
- * Input data into database
- * Verify accuracy and completeness of data
- * Identify, label and organize electronic storage media
- * Classify and maintain already existing electronic media within database
- * Assist staff in properly using NIMS database



In relation to managing website:

- * Source, select and organize information for inclusion and design the appearance, layout and flow of the website
- * Verify accuracy and completeness of data
- * Create and optimize content for the website using selected text and software
- * Keep text material updated

In relation to technical issues:

- * Troubleshoot light technical difficulties (ie: reconfiguring email accounts, assisting travelling staff in using webmail)
- * Communicate with staff experiencing technical difficulties and direct them to proper support if unable to assist

Requirements:

- * Completion of secondary school required. Completion of a college program in computer science, graphic arts, Web design or business is required; however, experience will be accounted.
- * Computer literacy is MANDATORY.
- * Must be willing to travel. A valid drivers' license is also required due to travel.

**PLEASE PROVIDE A LIST OF REFERENCES WHEN SUBMITTING YOUR CANDIDATURE.
ONLY CANDIDATES SELECTED FOR INTERVIEWS WILL BE CONTACTED.**

SEND YOUR RESUME TO:

MELISSA BROUSSEAU, COMMUNICATIONS & ADMIN. OFFICER

Via email: mbrousseau@niskamoon.org

Via fax : 514-637-4017

DEADLINE TO APPLY : FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2008